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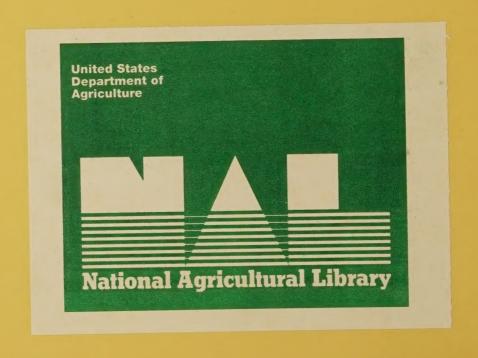
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
The Farm Security Administration
and
The Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Cooperating

SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR CONDITIONS IN HAMILTON COUNTY, IOWA

Tom Vasey, Farm Security Administration and Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Washington, D. C. November 1937 This publication is one of a series of 11 with similar titles by Tom Vasey and Josiah C. Folsom. The reports are based on surveys made in the late summer and early autumn of 1936 of the economic and social conditions of adult agricultural laborers. The counties studied represent various types of farming in different parts of the United States, as follows:

State	County	Type of Farming
California	Placer	Fruit
Colorado	Archuleta	Stock-ranch
Illinois	Livingston	Corn
Iowa	Hamilton	Corn-Hog
Kansas	Pawnee	Winter wheat
Kentucky	Todd	Tobacco
Louisiana	Concordia Parish	Cotton (eastern)
Minnesota	Lac qui Parle	Small grain
Pennsylvania	Wayne	Dairy
Tennessee	Fentress	Self-sufficing
Texas	Karnes	Cotton (western)



# SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR CONDITIONS IN HAMILTON COUNTY, IOWA

By Tom Vasey, Farm Security Administration and Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

In response to a manifest need for more detailed information concerning hired farm laborers, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Social Research Section of the Farm Security Administration /1 undertook in the summer and fall of 1936 to make surveys of agricultural labor conditions in 11 representative counties in as many States. Funds for this research were made available by the Works Progress Administration.

Both the hired farm laborers and their employers were canvassed by enumerators who filled out schedules with information drawn from each group. The schedule designed for the laborers was rather complete. Data concerning general characteristics such as age, sex, education, etc., were supplemented by findings as to incomes for the previous year, job descriptions, wage rates, work histories for the preceding 12 months, and participation in community affairs. The schedule which was used in interviewing operator-employers covered wage rates, fluctuations in numbers of employees, and methods of securing labor. <a href="mailto:legel-2">\begin{align\*} \text{2} \end{align\*}</a>

The enumerators were instructed to use the limited time available for reaching, as nearly as possible, all farms in the county hiring labor. However, certain classifications that were not primarily dependent on agriculture as a source of income were excluded from the study. These exceptions comprised country estates, livestock dealers, institutions, feed lots, boarding and lodging places, and unclassified farms. As to the laborers, the enumerators were directed to interview "only those hired to do the work of adults at adult wages." Thus, all unpaid family labor was eliminated, together with any child labor employed at wage rates below those of adults. "Hired labor" or "employees," as the terms are used in this study, signify individuals working for and dependent on wages that are paid by the farm operator regardless of the income derived from the crop. The status of the farmer, whether renter or owner, was not considered.

Hamilton County, Iowa, which was one of the counties selected for study, lies in the heart of the Corn Belt. It feeds the bulk of its corn on the farm. Its heavy labor demands are for planting, cultivating,

<sup>/1</sup> The Resettlement Administration, prior to September 1, 1937.

/2 The work was directed by representatives of the Department of Agriculture. The officials of the Experiment Station and members of the faculty of Iowa State College cooperated in advising with regard to study and in securing the enumerators, Samuel F. Goodsell, of Ames, and Harold A. Sherman, of Ledora.

and harvesting. When seasonal weather conditions are irregular, plowing and planting constitute the busiest times of the year, but only for very short intervals. Normally the harvest season represents the rush season. At the time of this survey, which extended from September 14 to October 13, most of the crops except corn had been harvested. Fall plowing was under way, silos were being filled, and corn husking was just beginning. Because of this situation the laborers interviewed probably represent a group whose employment is relatively stable.

Of the 2,263 farms enumerated by the 1935 Census, 1,223 located in various parts of the county were visited during the survey. At the time, 988 of them were hiring no labor. Schedules were obtained, however, from 186 farmers and from 225 of the 283 laborers whom they were employing. Data given here are taken from these schedules.

# General Characteristics

The laborers working on the farms of Hamilton County in September and October 1936 were predominantly young men. Nearly two-thirds were under 30 years of age, and 80 percent were under 40 (Table 1). A few, usually farmers' sons working out for wages, were in their teens. Those interviewed represented a well-schooled group. Only 28, or 12 percent, had not completed elementary school; all the others had finished the eighth grade and some had gone even further. Differences in age affected

Table 1.- Age and education of 224 agricultural laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

			-			
	:	110 51	Grades	completed	In I all a	
Total	: 5 65 :		: 0 8	:		: Not
	: 0 - 4:	5 - 7	: 8	: 9 - 12 :	Over 12	: reported
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4	100-00	-	3	1	-139	an lampingues
3	-	1	1	1	- 5	SPITE - DETROIT
7	-	_	1	5	11921	1
11	-	2	3	6	_	-
119	100 -1	6	51	60	2	87 J S 10 2 2 2
35	1001-11	6	21	8		1 50 / 1 - Diren
23	1010	2	18	2		E mil = ( mbs
14	2	3	6	1	1	1
6	1	4	1	1000-00	1. 3 - 11	STREET SOT IS
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	- 4 3 7 11 119 35 23 14 6	: 0 - 4:  -	: 0 - 4 : 5 - 7  -	Total: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	Total: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	: 0 - 4 : 5 - 7 : 8 : 9 - 12 : Over 12

the amount of education; 19 of the 28 who did not finish grammar school were 30 years old or over, but only 13 of the 88 who had more than the grammar school education were in this older age group.

Two-thirds of the workers were unmarried, nearly one-half of the total number being single men less than 30 years of age. A large proportion of the older men also were single. In fact, in none of the age groups did the married men outnumber those who were not married (Table 2).

Table 2.- Age and marital status of 224 agricultural laborers interviewed in Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

Marital status	: : Total					:50-59 :years		
Unmarried	150	24	82	18	14	8	3	1
Married	69	1	37	17	9	4	1	-
Widowed,								
divorced, or								
separated	5	-	-	-		2	2	1
				121			e i i	
Totals	224	25	119	35	23	14	6	2

As would be expected, taking age and marital status into account, very few workers reported dependents. Only 70, or less than one-third, mentioned wives, children, or any other persons for whose support they were responsible (Table 3). Less than 5 percent had more than 4 dependents. Laborers with families had relatively few children.

Table 3.- Dependents of 224 agricultural laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

		Laborers
Number of dependents	: Number	: Percent
0	154	68.8
1	16	7.1
2	22	9.8
3	12	5.4
4	10	4.5
5	3	1.3
7	3	1.3
8	1	.5
Total	224	100.0

These laborers had moved about very little. Slightly less than two-thirds were born in Iowa, but more than 90 percent considered this State as their permanent home (Table 4). Of the 16 who listed residence in bordering States, 14 had come into Iowa during 1936. With the exception of the foreign-born workers, most of those who had been born elsewhere came from neighboring States, Indiana being the only non-contiguous State which contributed any appreciable number. It may be symbolic of a new era of mobility that a recent advertisment for a farm hand specified "with house trailer, preferred."

Table 4.- Nativity and residence of 224 white male farm laborers,
Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

	:Na	tivity	:	Residence
State or country	; Number	: Percent	: Number	: Percent
Iowa	141	63.0	208	92.9
Missouri	17	7.6	10	4.5
Foreign countries	17	7.6	- 1- T	To perform the
Illinois	14	6.3	- trans - 1	MON JE 1 Dec
Indiana	10	4.4	- 100 TO 1	
Minnesota	5	2.2	3	1.3
South Dakota	3	1.3	-10	ned that were the
Kansas	3	1.3	10579 4761	and the water to
Other States	14	6.3	3	1.3
	CIT REGELERA	THE PARTY OF THE P	War and the same of the same o	
Totals	224	100.0	224	100.0

For the most part, the interviewed men were general farm laborers, doing any jobs that might be required of them. A few were hired specifically for harvest work, and 1 or 2 were operating farm machinery exclusively. Had this survey occurred a few weeks later, more harvest hands and more transient laborers would undoubtedly have been found.

#### Tenure Experience

The theory of the "agricultural ladder" assumes that the young farm laborer will be able in time to become a tenant and that he will eventually become an owner. The rather high proportion of young, single men suggests that the majority of the workers were serving their apprentice—ships prior to becoming owners. Four-fifths of the laborers had had no experience as farm operators. Of the one-fifth who did report such experience, some had ceased farm operation altogether but others, although they worked out for wages, continued to operate farms of their own as well (Table 5).

Table 5.- Previous farm operation experience of 224 agricultural laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

Experience :	Number :	Percent
None	181	80.8
Tenant	34	15.2
Owner	9	4,0
Total	224	100.0
the second secon	and the second s	

The laborers who had had experience as renters or owners were, on an average, older than those who reported no experience of this sort (Table 6). The likelihood of having been a farm operator is greater among the older men, for whom a loss in economic and social status is relatively more serious than for the younger men. One-fifth of all those interviewed were 40 years of age or over, but more than two-fifths of those who had been renters or owners were in a similar age group. On the other hand, nearly one-third of those who had moved up the agricultural ladder and then found it necessary to descend were under 30.

Table 6.- Comparison of age distribution of 224 farm laborers, by operator experience, Hamilton County, Iowa

	:Per	ccentage of labor	rers
	d spars set lud (esse: h	With operator	: With no operator
Age	: Total :	experience	: experience
	: (224 cases) :	(43 cases)	: (181 cases)
			-0000 Hally Salo- 0100
15 - 19	11.2	men.	13.8
20 - 29	53.1	32.6	58.6
30 - 39	15.6	23.3	13.3
40 - 49	10.3	18.6	8.3
50 - 59	6.2	18.6	3.3
60 - 69	2.7	4.6	2.2
70 - 79	.9	2.3	.5
			to fine of the contract
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0

"No profits," or general inability to "make a go of it," is given most frequently as the reason for relinquishing operator status. Changes in farm ownership, due to deaths among farm owners or, in a few instances, to sales, caused some tenants to give up their places (Table 7).

Table 7.- Reasons for termination of tenant status given by 28 agricultural laborers, /1 Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

Reason	: Number : Percent
o profits, not able to make a living	10 9000 35.7
ry something else	3 10.7
andlord died	3 10.7
ould not find a place	3 10.7
lone, no one to help	2 7.2
iscellaneous	7 25.0

/1 Fifteen of these 28 had quit since 1930; 5 other laborers, still tenants, were found by the enumerators.

No great changes in occupational status had occurred within the Hamilton County group during the year preceding the survey. Ninety-three percent of those who were interviewed said they were agricultural workers in August 1935, as well as in September 1936.

#### Income

The annual incomes of the agricultural workers showed a wide variation, ranging from \$20 to \$1,200 (Table 8). There was no marked concentration about any one figure for total earnings; 36 percent of all the incomes reported fell between \$300 and \$399, but the range has to be extended from \$200 to \$449 to include 72 percent. Although an intermediate group of incomes is not readily discernible, nine-tenths of the earnings were less than \$500.

The average total income per laborer and his family was \$314.91, of which \$287.65 could be ascribed to the agricultural earnings of the laborer himself. Other revenue sometimes came from the work of dependents in the fields, from nonagricultural work performed by the laborer or his dependents, or from relief. Only 27 workers reported nonagricultural work, and just 10 had dependents whose earnings were added to their annual incomes. In each of these cases, as well as in each of those with work relief, the additional income deriving from nonfarm sources formed an appreciable part of the total. It is in the family incomes above \$300 that these supplementary earnings become important. The majority of the workers, however, relied solely on their own earnings in agricultural labor. Although the highest income reported, \$1,200, came entirely from one job in agriculture, few earnings from farm work exceeded \$500. As regards the second highest income, \$500 was attributed to the worker's efforts in the fields and \$350 to his son's labor in nonagricultural employment.

Table 8. Total income, September 1935 - August 1936, of 217 agricultural workers, Hamilton County, Iowa

Number   Percent   Activation   Activation   Number   Percent   Activation   Number   Percent   Activation   Number   Percent   Activation   Number   Percent   Activate   Number   Percent   Activate   Number   Percent   Perc	### Agricultur    Jaborers			. 8		mar and a law		ed the source of	6	200				101
12 Foreint integral income income income income income in Number in Income i	13.08 113.08 113.08 113.08 113.08 113.08 114.077 266.00 295.26 339.33 385.91 539.82	0			Agricult BV	cural earnings		nagricultura Bv :	l earning Br	50		Relie	J	
12 5.5 113.08 17 7.8 161.88 25 11.6 266.00 25 11.6 266.00 29 18.0 295.26 39 18.0 295.26 39 18.0 399.33 22 10.1 385.91 6 2.8 1416.17	12 5.5 113.08 \$22.00 12 5.5 113.08 17 7.8 161.88 22 11.6 266.00 39 18.0 295.26 39 18.0 295.26 39 18.0 295.26 6 2.8 116.17 6 2.8 116.17  d 217 100.0 287.65 ered amounts as high as \$1,224.	Total income	Number		lal	dependents	1 lat	orers	depend	lents :	W	ork	Dir	American
12 5.5 113.08 1 \$59.00	113.08		4	1.8	1		1	1		1		1		95004
12   5.5   113.08   -	113.08	50 - 99	77	1.8	59.50	•		\$50.00		quest		egger L'egn	Legate Description	inger C
17     7.68     161.688     -     -     3     19,000     -     -     1     \$120.00     1       25     11.66     266.00     -     -     -     -     -     1     \$120.00     1       25     11.6     266.00     -     -     -     -     1     \$120.00     -     -     1       29     18.0     295.26     -     -     7     96.86     -     -     1     60.00     -     -     1     60.00     -     -     -     2     292.00     1       22     10.1     395.91     -     -     1     410.00     3     164.67     1     60.00     1     132.00     -       8     3.7     397.38     1     \$40.00     3     163.67     -	244.77 3 49.00 - 1 \$120.00 1 \$266.00 1 \$266.00 1 \$120.00 1	671 - 001	ង	5.5	113,08	oran S	Q Q	61.50	Tuesda.	the days	030	pred opt, t	ng de	SELW.
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8 3.7 397.38 1 \$\text{\$\text{\$4}\tilde{0.00}} \begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc	397.38       1       \$\psi\text{0.00}       3       163.69       -	लगा - ००	83	10.1	385.91		W	19,467	h	00°09		132 000	201	10510 1037
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		otals and	217	100.0	287.65	8 -	1 -	130,00		127.40	9	169,00		37.50

Very few of these laborers were on relief, although for some of those who were the amounts received were relatively large.

The number of days worked during the 12 months preceding the interview is given in Table 9. One-half of those who reported only agricultural employment worked 270 or more days per year, practically full time. Seasonal workers obtained from 120 to 239 days, or, roughly, from 5 to 9 months of work. For those with mixed employment, agricultural work claimed two-thirds of the time, and the total number of days employed was about the same as that reported by the laborers who were employed only in agriculture.

Table 9.- Days worked in agriculture and in mixed employment by 220 farm laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa

	: Agriculture	2 29	Mixed employmer	nt
Days	:	:	: Average in :	Average in
worked	: Number	: Number	: agricultural :no	onagricultural
0 00		2		
0 - 29	6	-		1918 ATR 1918
30 - 59	5	-		
60 - 89	10 194 3 194 3	4	52	20
90 - 119	8	2	37	58
120 - 149	13	1	86	59
150 - 179	19	3	89	73
180 - 209	15	1.	82	104
210 - 239	16	3	122	106
240 - 269	7	10	177	78
270 - 312	96	8	214	87
Totals	188	32	143	74

Relatively few workers had any appreciable amount of property or savings. The item most frequently reported was an automobile. Despite the fact that 92 lived on the farm upon which they were working, 148, or 66 percent, stated that they possessed a car. Twelve owned farm land, averaging 77 acres, and 7 reported other real estate. Savings in the form of bank accounts averaged \$287 for the 12 who listed them, and 54 carried life insurance policies averaging \$1,265. A very few reported the ownership of livestock, such as horses or cattle.

#### Wage Rates

The prevailing methods of pay of hired farm laborers in Hamilton County are by the month for the seasonal or permanent hands, and by the day or the piece for harvest hands. Four-fifths of those interviewed were

paid by the month; the remainder, except for 4 cases reporting piece work were employed by the day or by the week (Tables 10 and 11). The schedules from farm operators show a similar predominance of monthly rates of pay.

Although different types of labor are paid on different bases, all workers reported long hours, 6 days a week, and frequently chores on 7 days. Four-fifths of those interviewed worked 11 hours or more in the course of a normal day's work. The length of the working day had no relation to the wage rate but the method of payment did. The average hours per day of those on day rates was 10.9 as compared with 12.1 for those hired by the month.

According to the laborers' reports, the average rates of pay without regard to perquisites were \$32.79 per month and \$1.52 per day; according to the operators' reports, they were \$32.98 and \$1.65. By far the greater proportion of workers received additional pay in the form of perquisites, evaluation of which is quite difficult. Apparently, the value of the perquisites did not affect rates of pay. Although persons not receiving board tended to report higher rates than others, the number of cases was too small to point to a definite conclusion. Average wages for those who were supplied with houses were usually higher than for those who were furnished less valuable perquisites. The better workers probably received better pay as well as more perquisites.

The higher averages specified by farm operators may be due to the fact that each operator, although he was asked to give average rates in case he had more than one employee, probably reported his highest rate.

Nearly every worker who was furnished a house received, in addition, other perquisites such as varying quantities of provisions or the means of raising them. An allotment of garden space appeared more frequently than anything else on the list of miscellaneous perquisites. Among provisions, milk constituted the most important item, 31 workers receiving 3 to 4 quarts a day. Not infrequently animals owned by a laborer were kept at the employer's expense.

Average wage rates do not indicate the very definite clustering of actual rates that prevailed. Although the range of monthly wages reported by the laborers was from \$10 to \$60, 70 percent of them were paid either \$30 or \$35. A similar concentration is found when the operators' reports are studied. Two rates, \$1 and \$2, account for two-thirds of the daily rates reported by the workers.

Corn husking is the chief piece-work job of Hamilton County, but at the time of the survey it had barely begun. Piece rates were reported in only 4 cases, but 54 laborers had had jobs on this basis during the

Table 10.- Monthly wage rates with specified perquisites of agricultural laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

	1	Laborers t	reports	:		Operators'	report	5
Rate	: Total	: Without:	With:		Total	: Without:	With:	With
\$10.00	1		1				•••	-
15.00	2		2	-	1	1	***	-
16.00		-	-	***	1	~	1	-
17.50	1	-	-	1	1		-	1
20.00	3	-	2	1	2	-	1	1
25.00	12	-	9	3	12	·	10	2
26.00	1	ee	1	es .	3	-	3	
30.00	57	1	47	9	53	1	41	11
31.00	2	-	1	1	2	-	2	640
32.00	3	-	2	1	3	-	1	2
32.50	. 2	-	2	100	5	-	3	2
33.00	I	-	***	1	1	-	-	1
35.00	62	-	45	17	59	2	41	16
36.00	1	-		1	1	-	-	1
37.50	1	-	1	<b>60</b>	1	omit.	1	-
40.00	13	1	6	6	14	2	7	5
43.50	1	-	. 1	-	2	~	1	1
45.00	4	-	1	3	3		1	2
50.00	3	1	2		3	1	2	-
60.00	1	1	-	=	1	1	-	-
Totals	171	<u>4</u>	123	44	168	8	115	45
	s \$32.79	\$45.00	\$32.05	\$33.74	\$32.98	\$38.12	\$32.40	\$33.53

Table 11.- Daily and weekly wage rates with specified perquisites of agricultural laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa, September 1936

:		Laborers rep	orts			Operators' re	ports	
Rate :			With :	With:			With:	With
	Total	: perquisites:	board:	house:	Total	: perquisites:	board:	house
Per day:								
\$ .75	1	_	1	-	1	_	1	-
1.00	10	-	9	1	7	•	7	_
1.25	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-
1.50	7	-	7	-	9	_	9	140
2.00	12	3	9	-	7	1	6	-
2.25	-		-	•	2	_	2	-
2.50	1	-	1	-	3	_	3	-
3.00		•		-	1	ent	1	-
Totals	33	3	29	1	32	1	31	-
Averages	\$1.52	\$2.00	\$1.49	\$1.00	\$1.65	\$2.00	\$1.64	
Per week:								
\$7.50	2		- 1	1	/1			
8.00	2	40	1	1				
10.00	1	-		1				
Totals	5 ·	-	2	3				
/1 Weekl	y rates	were not requ	ested o	f opera	tors.			

1935 season. The predominant rate per bushel was 4 cents; 45 huskers reported average earnings of \$3.32 per day at this rate. Had the survey occurred a few weeks later, many of the same laborers who were being paid by the month at the time of the interview would have been found husking corn at piece-work wages. Not infrequently those who are employed the year round receive monthly cash wages from March to about October 15; then they husk corn by the bushel for about 6 weeks; and after that they receive merely room and board during the winter months. One interviewed laborer was paid \$60 a month during the busier half of the year and \$30 during the slack 6 months.

Comparison of wage rates for Hamilton County with those for Iowa as a whole show higher averages per month with board for the sample county. Rates per day with board as reported by operators were higher and those reported by laborers were lower than the Iowa average. Wages without board were reported too infrequently in the survey to permit a comparison.

Table 12.- Average wage rates as reported for Iowa and for Hamilton County, Iowa, October 1936

		Per month				Per day		
Source	:	: Without		With	:	Without		With
		board		board	:	board	•	board
Federal Crop								
Reporting Service /1		\$37.00		\$28.50		\$2.00		\$1.55
Farm operators' reports /2		38.12 /3		32.40		2.00 /5		1.64
Farm laborers' reports <u>/2</u>		45.00 <u>/4</u>		32.05		2.00 /6		1.49

<sup>/1</sup> The Federal Crop Reporting Service items are averages of reports of farm operators who regularly report labor among other items. This line represents the Iowa average on October 1, 1936.

### Tenure of Employment

Because of the character of the industry, instability marks the tenure of agricultural employment. Even in this relatively stable type of farming (dominated by the family-size farm) fluctuations in employment occur. Many operators report the employment of occasional labor only — for plowing, planting, harvesting periods, or for handling stock. On the

<sup>&</sup>lt;u>/2</u> Farm operators and laborers were interviewed in Hamilton County in September and October 1936.

<sup>/3</sup> Eight reports.

<sup>/4</sup> Four reports.

<sup>/5</sup> One report.

<sup>∠6</sup> Three reports.

animal specialty farms, of which the corn-hog farms comprise the predominant type in this county, the average number of laborers per farm reporting for the busiest season, usually July, was 2.03. It was 1.36 at the time of the visit in September - October 1936, but only 0.69 during the first week of January. The number employed at the slack time is only 34 percent of the number employed at the peak. Although preparing crops and harvesting them demand labor, the heaviest demands come in May and July when large numbers of stock must be handled.

Operators report that their crop-season laborers can expect from 30 to 35 weeks of work, but that harvest laborers can expect only 1 to 4 weeks. More than three-fifths of those interviewed were hired in March 1936 or later. Because of the long-time employees, however, the average length of time on the job was 23.5 months for those paid by the month and 2.9 months for those paid by the day. Apparently, workers with permanent or seasonal tenure were most likely to have been employed during March and April than at any other time during the year (Table 13).

Table 13.- Year and month 224 present farm jobs began, Hamilton County, Iowa

						_									
	:			.930 or:		*		:		:		:		•	
Month		Total	:	before:	1931	:	1932	:	1933	:	1934	:	1935	:	1936
Towns No.		9							_		_		1		. 7
January				3			2				7		-		4
February		8		1	gaph artist		~		_		7		7.0		32
March		70		9	7		1		5		6		10		
April		31		1	* ann		-		1		- 444		-		29
May	0	9		-	_		-		1 .				1		7
June		5		1	2010		, ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,		1		_		-		3
July		10			-				-		2		-		8
August		18		2	1		-				-		1		14
September		41		estin	-		-		-		nain.		4		37
October		13		atom.	w8004		Martine .		1		1		2		. 9
November		3		_	dente		2		-		-		1 .		-
December		7		_	1		-		1		_		5		
Unknown		1		1	-		~-		-		10		and .		
Totals		224		15	9		5		10		10		25		150

Direct contact between the prospective employer and employee was the general method by which jobs and workers were brought together. Although an intermediary was not always involved, many laborers had obtained their jobs through acquaintances and 7 others had secured work through the use of a public employment agency (Table 14).

Table 14.- Methods of placement of farm laborers, Hamilton County, Iowa

	:Laborers'	reports	: Operato	Operators' reports			
Method	: Number :	Percent	: Number :	Percent /			
Laborers' search	93	41.5	84	45.2			
Sought by operator	83	37.1	141	75.8			
Through a friend	37	16.5	-	-			
Through a public							
employment agency	7	3.1	6	3.2			
Advertising	or east _glaid		3	1.6			
Miscellaneous	4	1.8	2	1.1			

/1 The percent of 186 operators who report these methods. An operator may report more than one method; hence this column does not necessarily equal 100 percent.

# Community Participation

The actual extent to which laborers participated in community life is difficult to determine. Membership in various organizations was negligible. Two workers had belonged to nonagricultural labor unions, but none were, or had been, members of agricultural unions. The only farmers' organization represented was the Farm Bureau; 1 laborer was a member and 3 others reported past memberships. One worker had also been in a cooperative.

Table 15.- Community participation of 224 white male agricultural laborers, September 1935 - September 1936, Hamilton County, Iowa

	A	:			Percent		
	Activity		reporting	•	teborring	: repor	teu
	Shopping		220		98.2	58.0	
	Community entertainments		175		78.1	13.2	5
	Religious meetings		156		69.6	23.	1
	Visits to friends						
	or relatives		113		50.4	8.	6
	Circus		104		46.4	2.	3
	Ball games		87		38.8	11.	1
	Fishing trips		60		26.8	6.	9
	Movies		56		25.0	82.	8
	Farmers' institutes		17		7.6	3.	9
	Farm-practice						
	demonstrations		14		6.2	1,	8

The laborers in the community made contacts more frequently through channels of a less formal nature. Practically everyone went to town once a week to shop, and most of the workers attended various community entertainments more than once a month. Religious services ranked third in numbers participating (Table 15).

Though only one-fourth of the group reported attendance at movies, the frequency of attendance was high. A larger percentage than in any other State in which these studies were made had attended farmers' institutes or demonstrations.

The farm hands in Hamilton County are not socially or economically apart from the operators. They form a young, fairly well-schooled group, many of whom undoubtedly look forward to becoming farm operators. But incomes are low and full-time work is seldom assured. This area presents a picture of the "hired man" on a family-operated farm rather than one of an "agricultural worker" on a corporation farm.





